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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY USSR

DATE DISTR. 20 Jul 1954

SUBJECT      Extent of Traffic on and Details of Construction of Specific Motor Roads in Central Asia, with Enclosed Sketches

PLACE  
ACQUIRED

NO. OF ENCLS. 6 (A-F)  
(LISTED BELOW)

DATE  
ACQUIRED

SUPPLEMENT TO  
REPORT NO.

DATE (OF IN

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1. There was generally no through traffic on the 12 Central Asian motor roads [redacted] covered by this report. By lack of through traffic, [redacted] no vehicles such as buses and trucks traveled these roads on a regular basis.

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2. The Tashkent - Ura-Tyube road [see Enclosure A7]:

- (a) The Chirchik River was nine kilometers south of Tashkent by road. There was much traffic to and from the river on this stretch, because sand and gravel were needed for construction work in Tashkent. At times there were perhaps one thousand or more trucks per day traveling over this section. There was little traffic from the kolkhozes and there were few vehicles available there. The inhabitants used more the Begovat - Tashkent railway for their travels. From the Chirchik River to Pskent, about 30 trucks and cars per day went over the road. The vehicles came from rural "raikoms" (rayon committees) and from kolkhozes. The latter sent out vehicles to bring back goods for the stores of the kolkhozes. Cotton was usually brought out by camel. The section of road from Pskent to Ura-Tyube was traveled by five or ten vehicles per day. The motor road which paralleled the railway

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had approximately the same traffic pattern, with the exception of the heavy truck traffic to the river found on the main road.

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(b) The direct road, not paralleling the railway, from Tashkent to Ura-Tyube:

- (1) The Tashkent-Sayat section had a sand roadbed about 15-20 cm thick. Some stretches were paved with cobblestones (12 cm thick) and others with gravel (20 cm thick, in three layers). The road was cambered so that it would drain and had ditches.
- (2) The Sayat - Ura-Tyube section was not paved. Its first 50 kilometers was not a real road at all. One just drove over the loess and the route had been made wide by preceding traffic. The 72 kilometers from Dalverzin to Ura-Tyube was an improved dirt road. It was, however, much worse to drive over than the first 50 kilometers. It was narrow (from 7 to 10 meters; ie two-lane), went up and down through cotton fields, had ditches, but no adequate drainage. There was no roadbed. When it rained in the autumn, the road became a sea of mud and was not used.

(c) The road from Tashkent to Ura-Tyube, which paralleled the railway, very frequently (seven or eight times), crossed and criss-crossed the railway. Then, nine kilometers south of the Syr Darya River, it crossed to the west side of the railway and paralleled it consistently. This road was built later and at a more gradual pace than the main Tashkent - Stalinabad highway. The road went through Yangi-Yul (or the Kaufmanskaya railway station), "poselok" Syr Darya, Mirzachul, and Ursatyevskaya station. From that point it went on without the railway to Ura-Tyube. The 68 kilometers from Tashkent to Syr Darya "poselok" was surfaced with gravel. It had a sand roadbed, was cambered, and had ditches. The 92 kilometers to Ursatyevskaya had gravel in some sections. Of the 41 kilometers to Ura-Tyube, 39 kilometers were paved with cobblestones. The road here was only three and one-half meters wide, ie one-lane, had no roadbed and no effective drainage. All the rest of this Tashkent - Ura-Tyube road had two lanes. The last two kilometers of the road ran along a small, shallow, gravel riverbed. The main purpose of this road was to serve the sovkhoses and kolkhoses, particularly those growing cotton.

3. The Samarkand - Guzar section was part of the Samarkand - Kitab - Guzar - Derbent - Termez motor road [see Enclosure B]. The most important part was the section from Guzar south to Termez. The Samarkand - Kitab part of the road was fairly important, but the Kitab - Guzar section was not, because it was paralleled by a railway. The whole route was an old Czarist post road, which had been used to carry the mail and by travelers journeying to the garrison town of Termez. It was a dirt road, except for some sections which were surfaced with gravel. The traffic was light, averaging approximately the equivalent of 10 vehicles making a round trip per 24 hours.

- (a) The Samarkand - Kitab section had the heaviest traffic, about 20-25 vehicles per day. The quality of the road was good. It ran for the most part through mountains. The road had a dirt surface and the soil was rocky, making a good foundation for driving. The width was seven meters (two-lane) and there was drainage. There was no roadbed.
- (b) The Kitab - Dekhanabad (42 kilometers south of Guzar) section was poor. There was no roadbed, except for 15 or 20 kilometers where the road was surfaced with a light coating of gravel. The whole Samarkand - Termez road, except for these 15 or 20 kilometers in the difficult Kitab - Dekhanabad (formerly Guntaliak) section had no roadbed. This section from Kitab to Dekhanabad was nine meters wide and had no drainage. It was constantly in a state of deterioration from the passage of motor vehicles, as was the stretch from Dalverzin to Ura-Tyube mentioned above. It was almost impassable during the heavy rains of December and January. The traffic on this section was the lightest for the whole road, because it was a bad section and was alongside a railway. Approximately five vehicles traveled it a day.

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- (c) The Dekhanabad - Shirabad section ran through mountains and was seven meters wide. It had a dirt surface but ran over hard soil and had drainage. It was better than the Kitab - Dekhanabad portion. Traffic was about the same for both sections.
  - (d) The Shirabad - Termez section was 51 kilometers in length. No road had actually been built on this stretch, except for the erection of two or three wooden bridges. One drove more or less where one wanted over the steppe. All the other sections of the Samarkand - Termez road had required road construction. The Shirabad - Termez section was about 100 meters wide. It was a good route as it ran over hard rocky soil. There was no real drainage. It was traveled by about 20-25 vehicles per day. This was fairly sizeable traffic for Central Asia and was to be found on this portion because there was a railway station in Termez and Shirabad was a sizeable small town, situated in a cotton growing region.
  - (e) The Samarkand - Termez road was important strategically. It would be valuable in any military movement southward against Afghanistan, ie the fortress at Mazr-i-Sharif. A road led from the latter location to Kabul.
  - (f) The dirt road from Derbent via Baisun to Stalinabad was considered important, as it was the only motor road to Stalinabad, except for the one from Ura-Tyube. The latter route was closed by snow in the mountains during the winter, ie November - April. The Derbent - Stalinabad road was open all year. It was about seven meters wide, had no roadbed, but did have some drainage. Traffic on the stretch from Derbent to Baisun was only about five vehicles per day, as it was for that matter from Derbent to Shurchi station, a distance of about 90 kilometers. There was even less traffic from the station on to Stalinabad.
4. The motor road from Ashkhabad to Kizyl-Arvat and southwest to Gasan-Kuli /see Enclosure C/ should be considered as one route, rather than the Ashkhabad - Kizyl-Arvat - Kazandzhik road. The route from Kizyl-Arvat to Kazandzhik had no importance. A road was never really constructed on this stretch, although one could drive over open country. En route to Kazandzhik there were sheep and goat kol-khozes. As a result, there was some traffic, perhaps five vehicles per day. The desert began after Kazandzhik. The Ashkhabad - Kizyl-Arvat - Gasan-Kuli road is a strategic one, as it would serve as the route for military movement against Iran in event of hostilities.
- (a) The Ashkhabad - Kizyl-Arvat section paralleled the main railway from Tashkent via Samarkand to Krasnovodsk. The railway was single-track and broad gauge. The motor road was an improved dirt one, about 12-13 meters wide. Some parts merely went over the hard ground of the region and these parts were the best for traveling. There was no roadbed and little drainage. It was an all-season route. The motor road ran on the north side of the railway, usually very close to the railway, and did not cross it. There was very little traffic, at most the equivalent of five machines per day, round trip. The vehicles belonged to kol-khozes and to officials of "raikoms" (rayon committees). The traffic near Ashkhabad was somewhat heavier, about 10-15 vehicles per day.
  - (b) The road turned southwest from Kizyl-Arvat to Gasan-Kuli on the Caspian Sea near the Iranian border. This was a more important stretch of the road as it did not parallel a railway. The Atrek River which forms the Soviet-Iranian border in this area flows into the Caspian at Gasan-Kuli. The terminus of the Trans-Iranian Railway (Abadan - Bandar-Shah) is near there. The motor road was an improved dirt road over hard soil. In the mountains it was five to seven meters wide, which may be considered two-lane. It was wider elsewhere. There was no roadbed, a little drainage, and practically no bridges. Drainage at stream crossings was achieved by paving a "lotok" (trough-shaped spot) with cobblestones and permitting the water to pass over it. One drove through the "lotok". Particularly in the years immediately preceding World War II, the military authorities requested the Turkmen SSR to maintain the road in good condition. The Republican authorities did some maintenance work on it. [redacted] at present /1954/ the Soviet military also see to it that the

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road remains in proper shape. The soil of the area drains well. There are practically no fields along the road and therefore one is not limited to a narrow route. The road was used for maneuvers several times. Except for spring and early summer, there was no water available on the section of road from Kizyl-Arvat southwestward for about 40 kilometers, until the road reached the Atrek River. Water had to be brought in by railway to Kizyl-Arvat. The traffic from Kizyl-Arvat southwestward for about 25 kilometers to the turn-off to the Kara-Kala Valley consisted of about 25 vehicles per day. From the turnoff to Chap, there were about 10 machines. From Chap to Gasan-Kuli, there were only about five vehicles. Most of the military transportation, both of men and supplies, was by the Caspian Sea from Krasnoyodsk to Gasan-Kuli.

- (c) Up to 1941 in Gasan-Kuli there was only the headquarters of a "pogranichni otriad" (border unit) of the NKVD [MVD]. It was [redacted] equivalent to a regiment, which was spread out along the border. Along with the headquarters at Gasan-Kuli there was probably a company of the NKVD regiment, a sergeants' school, and some cutters for sea patrol. There had been thought given, even prior to World War II, to station army troops in Kizyl-Arvat (a cavalry or rifle regiment) and in Gasan-Kuli (an armored reconnaissance battalion). It is probable that army troops are now [1954] stationed in those two towns.

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5. The Ashkhabad - Gaudan road [see Enclosure C] was built during the period 1933 - August 1934 by some of the military labor troops under my command.

[redacted] it was well built. Its length was 34 kilometers. As per agreement, the Iranians at the same time built a road from Gaudan on the Soviet-Iranian border to Meshed in Iran. The road was constructed for commercial purposes and was extensively used for trade. The Soviets obtained such Iranian items as cotton, oranges, and wool. The road was also important militarily because it could be used for a march on Kandahar and Karachi. The road was nine meters wide, surfaced with gravel, had a sand roadbed and drainage. It was open all year. Traffic varied with trade relations between the USSR and Iran and with the time of year. It was approximately from 10 to 100 vehicles per day.

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6. The usual civilian traffic on the Samarkand - Ursatyevskaia road was of a local character [see Enclosure D]. The normal route to travel would be from Samarkand east to Mitani (or along the road north of the railway) to Dzhizak. Then one would definitely take the road which runs south of the railway and which extends to Ursatyevskaia via Zaamin. No one traveled the route north of the railway in the Zaamin region, because the area was uninhabited. However, one could drive over the route across open country, but no road had really been built there.

- (a) The first two-thirds of the section of road from Samarkand to Dzhizak formed an improved dirt route, nine meters wide, no roadbed, and little drainage. It was a poor road. The last one-third was better. One merely drove across open country and there had been no actual road building. It was an all-year route. The traffic consisted of local kolkhoz vehicles and was somewhat heavier near Samarkand.

- (b) The stretch of road running south of the railway from Dzhizak to Ursatyevskaia was for most of its length an improved dirt road. It was a poor one. The road was nine meters wide, had no roadbed and little drainage. There was local kolkhoz traffic.

- (c) One may say that the Samarkand - Ursatyevskaia road was not good enough for troop movement, particularly in its improved sections. Sustained military traffic would [redacted] wreck the road and its bridges.

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- (d) The Old Post Road, from Dzhizak to "poselok" Syr Darya was utilized only by the occasional travelers between Samarkand and Tashkent. It was an excellent route over which to drive most of the year and was open all year. One merely drove over open country. [The remainder of the road network from Ursatyevskaia and Ura-Tyube to Tashkent is shown in greater detail in Enclosure A.]

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(e) Roads in the area suitable for troop movement are: 1) to Stalinabad - from Tashkent via Pskent or via "poselok" Syr Darya, and 2) to Samarkand and Termez - the Old Post Road would definitely be used, and then the route via Mitan.

7. The Samarkand - Katta-Kurgan road [see Enclosure D] had only local significance. It was very poor. The road paralleled the railway and most of the traveling was done by railway. The motor road was of the improved dirt type, nine meters wide, had no roadbed and very little drainage. It was open all year. The traffic was light and of a local character. About 10 or 15 motor vehicles per day traveled the road in the region nearer Samarkand. Several dozens of horse-drawn wagons per day used the road. The road traversed a cotton-growing area.
8. The Chinkent - Vannovka - Dzhambul road [see Enclosure E] was part of the Old Post Road which ran from Tashkent via Chinkent to Dzhambul. The Chinkent - Vannovka - Dzhambul section ran through rolling foothills and had very little traffic, because of the small number of inhabitants in the area and because most of the traveling was done on the nearby railway. 25X1  
 It had no military significance and even its local significance was small. The population was scanty, not much cotton was grown in the area, and there was very little irrigation. It was better than some of the other roads in Central Asia. It had never actually been constructed or improved; one merely drove over open country. 25X1
9. The Frunze - Alma-Ata - Ili road [see Enclosure F] was also an old post road. It was no longer important after the railway was built in 1929 and it ran through sparsely settled country. The motor road had never actually been constructed and one merely drove over open country. It was not bad and was an all-year route. The road was only of local interest and had no military significance. There was very little traffic - only local traffic, from kolkhoz to city, near Frunze and Alma-Ata. There was no regular through traffic.
10. The Tashkent - Chinkent road [see Enclosure E] was also part of the Old Post Road. For the first 30 kilometers northeast of Tashkent, it was paved with cobblestones. It was seven meters wide, had a sand roadbed and some drainage, and had been built in Czarist times. The rest of the road had never actually been constructed and ran over open country. It was fairly good all year. The traffic was light, perhaps five motor vehicles per day. Because of the general shortage of motor vehicles and gasoline, most movement was by railway. In general, there was no regular through traffic of freight or passenger motor vehicles in the USSR.
11. The Bukhara - Kagan road [see Enclosure B] was 10 kilometers long. It was seven meters wide, surfaced with gravel, and,  had no roadbed and no drainage. 25X1  
 It was open all year. The road had been built by the local Emir before the Russian Revolution. There was quite a bit of local traffic between the two towns as many persons lived in Kagan, where the better European quarters were located, and worked in Bukhara, which was the capital of Bukhara "oblast." A single-track, broad-gauge railway paralleled the motor road. A passenger train composed of five or seven old cars made a round trip between Bukhara and Kagan four times a day, operating like a local tramway.
12. The Bukhara - Gishduvan road [see Enclosure B] had also been built by the Emir. It had not been constructed properly from an engineering viewpoint, but gravel had been dumped on it occasionally with the result that the roadway had become fairly firm, having become a mixture of gravel and dirt. The width varied, averaging perhaps from seven to nine meters and never becoming less than two-lane. There was no roadbed and no drainage. It was an all-year route. The local traffic was light, less than on the Bukhara-Kagan road.
13. The Mary (Merv) - Chardzhou road did not exist and  does not now 25X1  
 [1954]. One could travel from Merv to Chardzhou on horseback. One encountered only desert and the main railway line. There were no settlements, except for 10 or 11 railway stations. Everyone traveled this route by rail. About 200 or 300 persons lived at the railway station of Uch-Adzhi. These people had camels and went to Chamchakly to gather saksaul wood for fuel. A single-track, broad-gauge railway line, which was moved from one location to another as needed, extended from Uch-Adzhi to Chamchakly.

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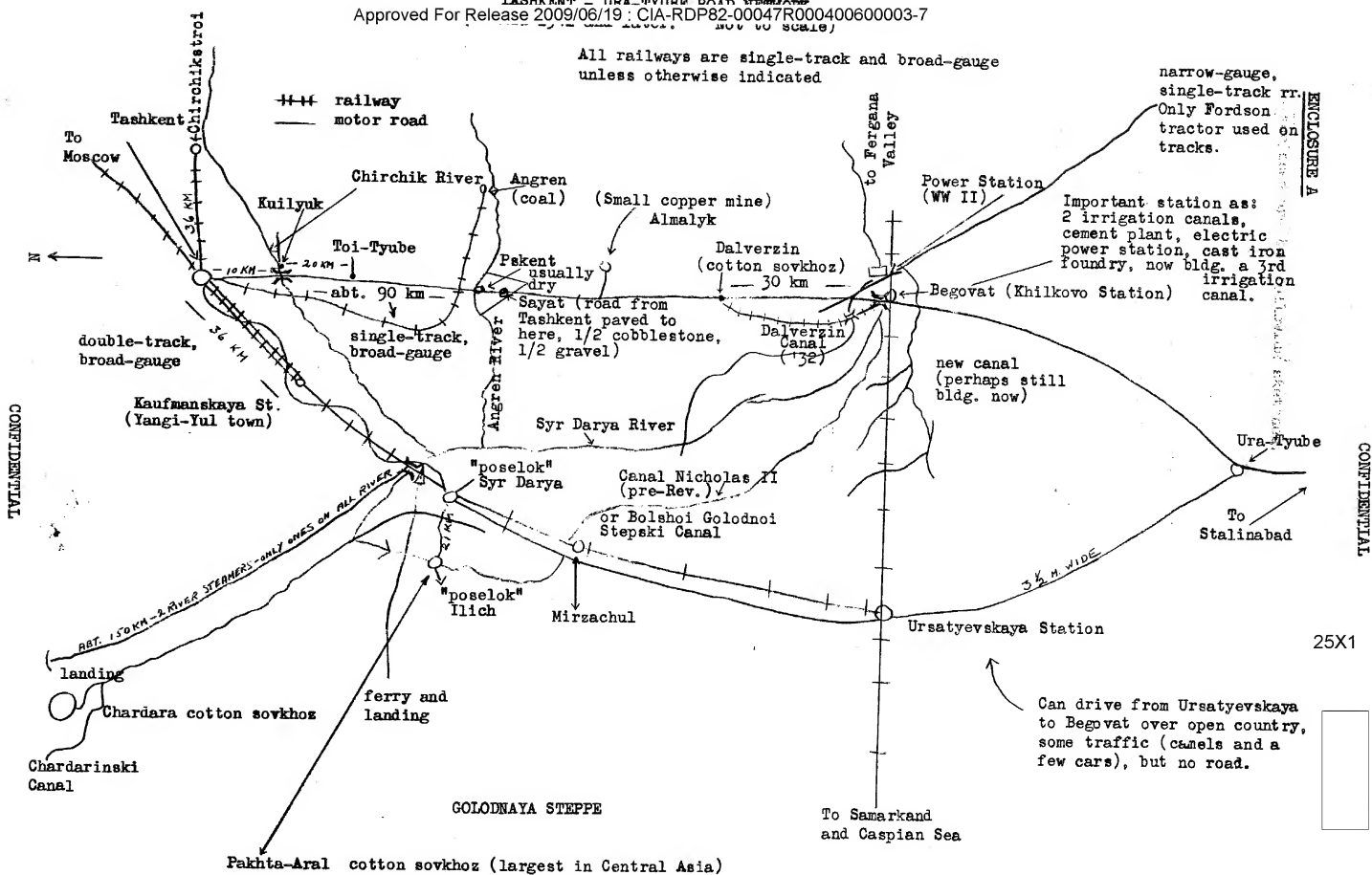
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- ENCLOSURE (A) - Tashkent - Ura-Tyube Road Network not to scale
- (B) - The Samarkand - Kitab - Guzar - Derbent - Termez Road and Other Routes not to scale
- (C) - The Ashkhabad - Kizyl-Arvat - Gasan-Kuli Road not to scale
- (D) - The Samarkand - Urastyevskaia Road and Other Routes not to scale
- (E) - The Chirchik - Vannovka - Dzhambul Road not to scale
- (F) - The Frunze - Alma-Ata - Ili Road not to scale

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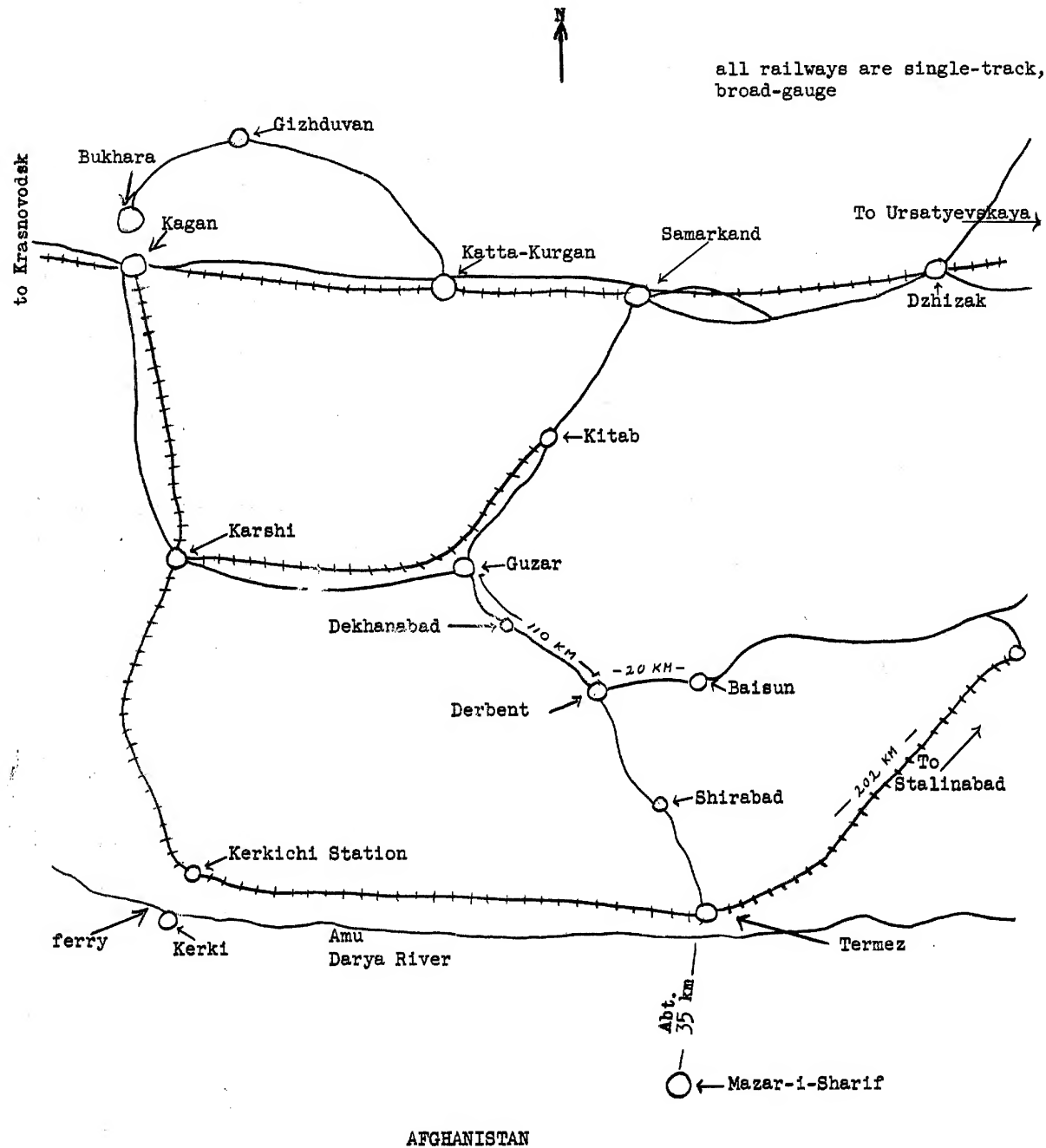
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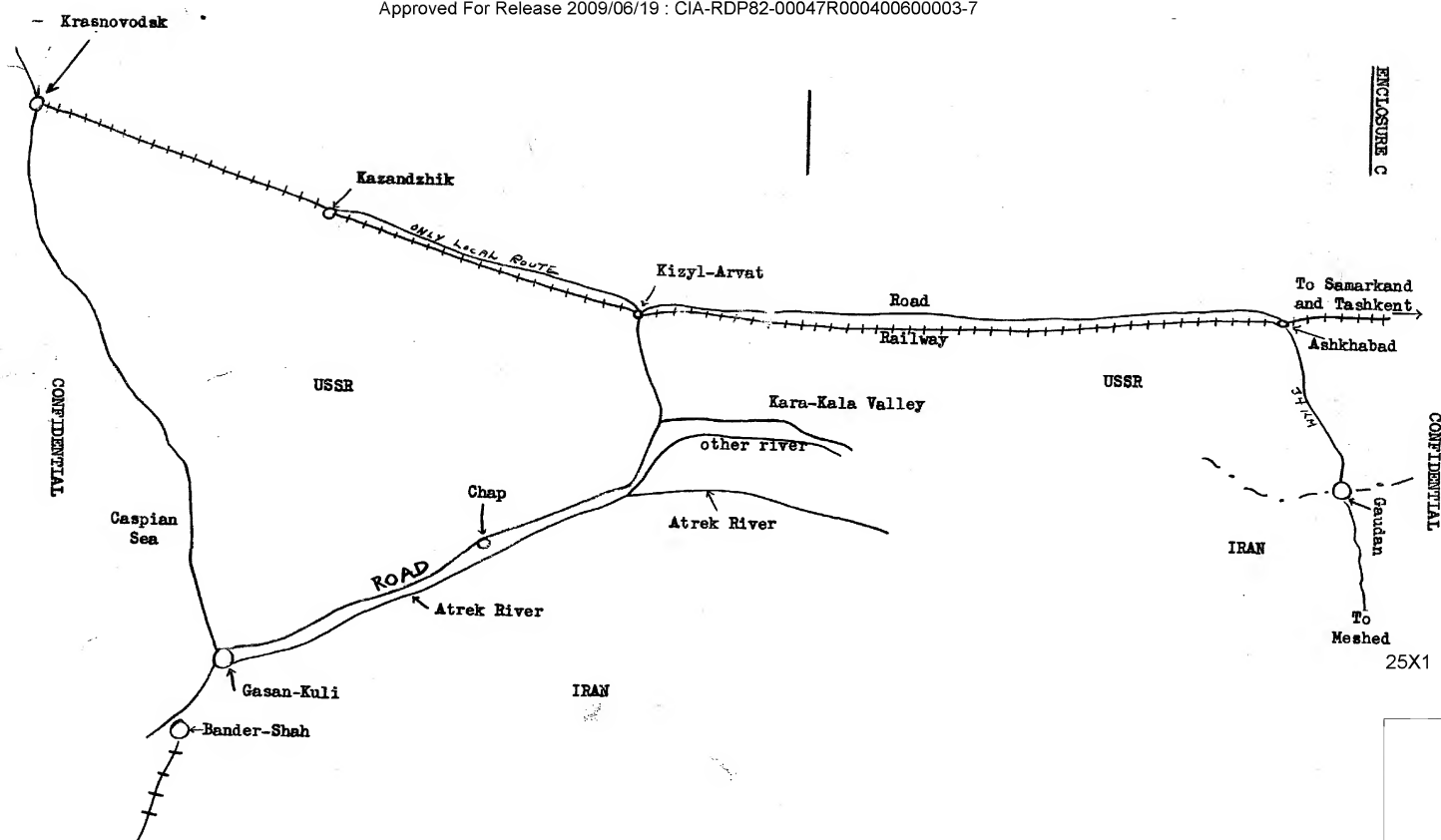
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ENCLOSURE BTHE SAMARKAND - KITAB - GUZAR - DERBENT - TERMEZ ROAD AND OTHER ROUTES  
(to mid-1942 and later. Not to scale)

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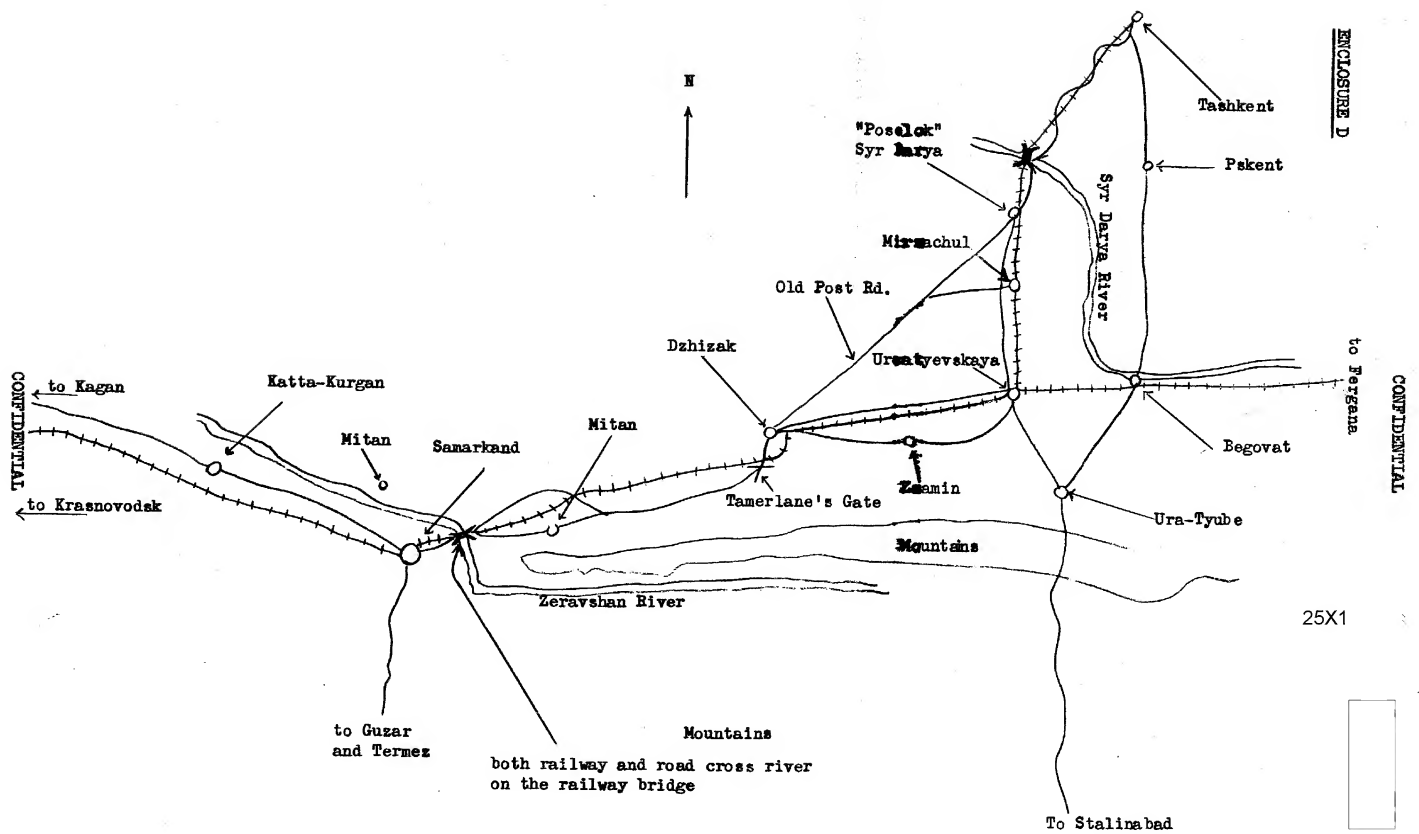




ENCLOSURE C

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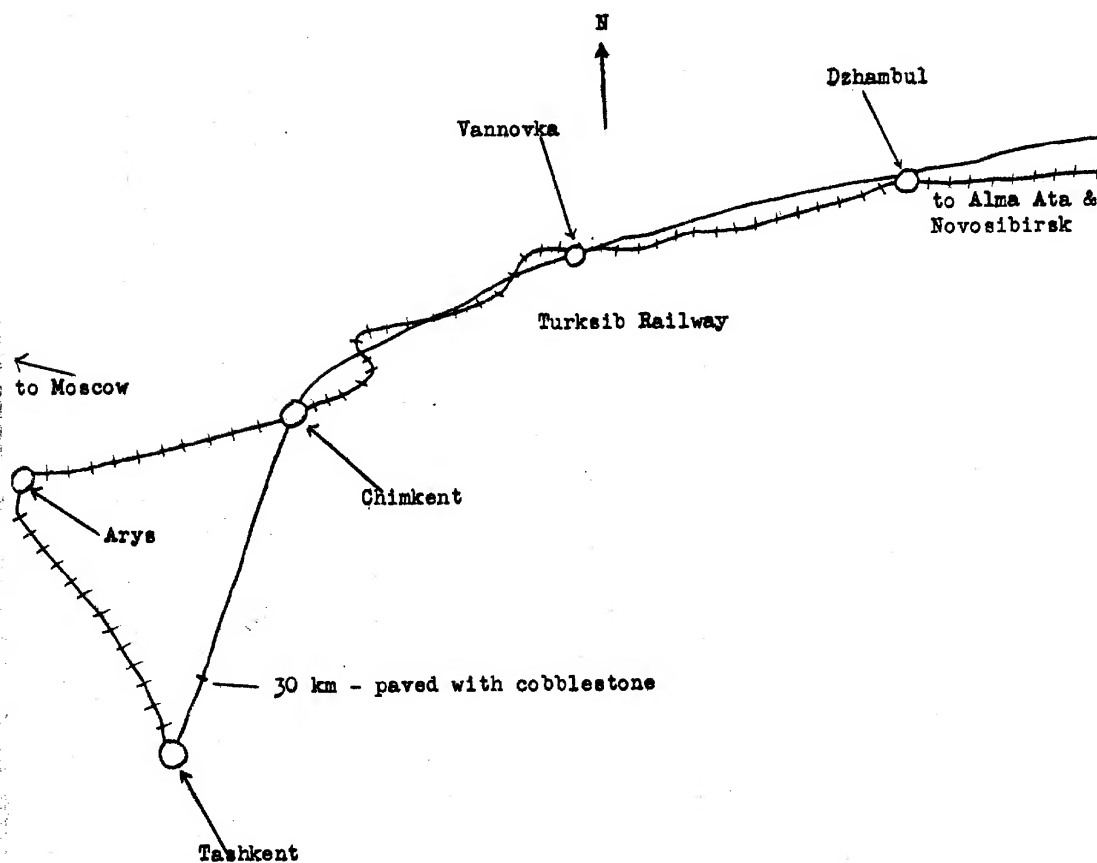


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ENCLOSURE E

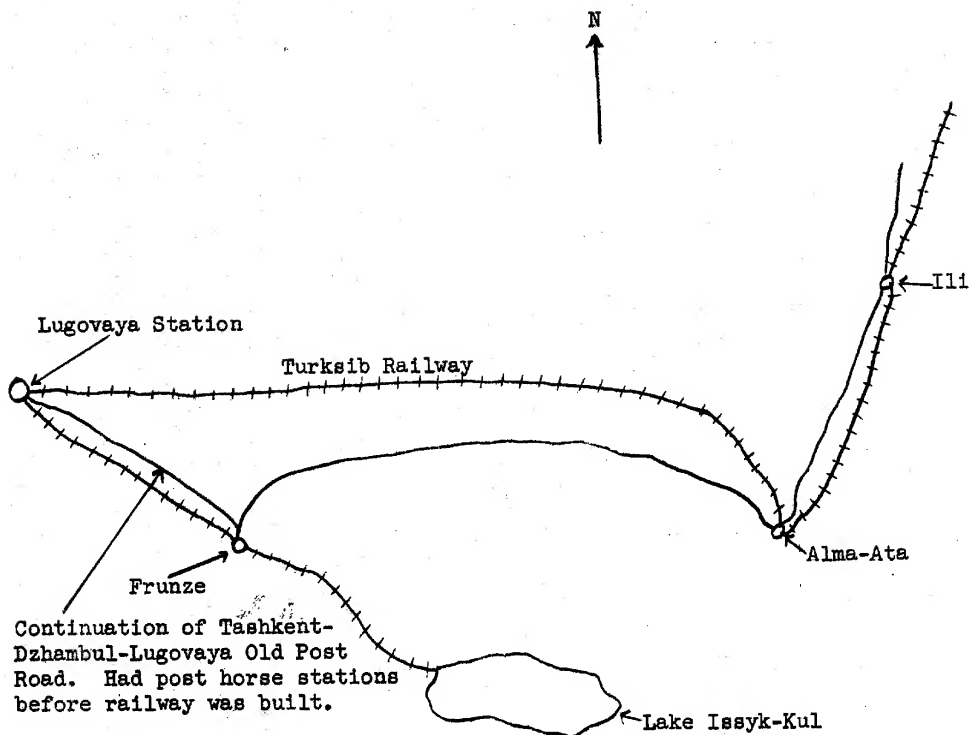
THE CHIMKENT - VANNOVKA - DZHAMBUL ROAD



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ENCLOSURE FTHE FRUNZE - ALMA-ATA - ILI ROAD

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